

## The Rare Scott #115 New Surcharge Type Also Discovered

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I believe there are more Spanish Philippine collectors today than there were 20 years ago, at least it seems that way in the United States. One thing most of them have in common is a want list with Scott #115 on it. It is the surcharged stamp, 8 centavos (black) on 10 cuartos bistro Derecho Judicial issue. This stamp is rarely seen in auctions, and in scarcity, compares to #25 and #25A. This article describes the surcharged issue, including a newly discovered surcharge type, two dates of issue, inventory of reported stamps, scarcity, handstamp position varieties, and forgeries.



**Figure 1.** Scott #115 with type VIIIa surcharge. Only used single known (Don Peterson Collection)

As is often the case, I depend upon the generosity of other collectors to help solve Philippine philatelic mysteries. I could not have prepared this article without the assistance of Richard Miggins. His vast collection of #115s, possibly the largest in the world, and keen knowledge of Philippine philately, particularly the 1881-1888 surcharged period, continues to challenge me with a reservoir of study material and projects.

### The Surcharges

After inspecting many #115s, it became evident that two different surcharge types exist – one known type (from Bartels et al., 1904) and one newly discovered type (hereafter referred to as type VIIIa). They both are believed to be genuine. The two surcharge types are described in Table 1 and are illustrated in **Figures 2 and 3**.

<b>Table 1 Description of Surcharge Types on Scott #115</b>			
<b>Surcharge Type</b>	<b>“CO” of CORREOS</b>	<b>“O” of HABILITADO</b>	<b>“T” of HABILITADO</b>
<b>Type VIII</b> Bartels et al. (1904)	All letters of CORREOS even-sized	“O” more oval in HABILITADO	Thin “T” of HABILITADO
<b>Type VIIIa</b> (new type)	Smaller “CO” than rest of CORREOS	“O” almost round in HABILITADO	Thick “T” of HABILITADO

I believe that Bartels surcharge type VIII (issued April 1881) may be a re-touched or repaired type VIIIa (issued January 1881).



**Figure 2.** Scott #115 with Bartels (1904) type VIII surcharge (R. Miggins Coll.)



**Figure 3.** Scott #115 with new type VIIIa surcharge (8/15-17/08 Regency Auction).

## Issuance of Stamp

I reviewed nine primary references regarding the issuance of #115 (**Table 2**). The earliest reference was Moens (1883-84), which cited the date of issue as January 1881. Although Cotter y Quinto (1897) cited an 1883 date and an 1883 decree as the authority, I believe that reference was incorrect. No other primary references support that date. Three other key primary references cite January 1881 (or 1881) as the issuance date for #115, including Mencarini (1896), a key primary reference for Spanish Philippine stamps. We also know that surcharge type VIII for #116, the black DOS REALES on blue revenue issue, was issued in April 1881 (Bartels et al., 1904). Type VIII is also the most common of the two types found on #115. **Thus, #115 appears to have been issued on two dates, each with a different surcharge type: (1) in January 1881 with surcharge type VIIIa, and (2) in April 1881 with surcharge type VIII. The earliest Scott Catalogue to list this stamp was in 1896.**

As discussed, both surcharges are different from each other. Was the January 1881 surcharge die re-touched to become Bartels surcharge type VIII in April 1881? It is plausible, although no records have been found or likely exist to clarify this. It is possible that portions of the January 1881 handstamp die were damaged or broken shortly after it was used, thus requiring a re-touch. Lacking any additional information, I believe that type VIIIa was issued first in January 1881 on #115, then was re-touched or repaired shortly afterwards, and was released again in April 1881 as type VIII to produce additional #115s (a second printing), and all of the #116s. These two surcharge types were not used to produce any other stamps.

No reference has been found indicating the quantity of stamps issued in January or April 1881 for #115. However, based on the inventory results in **Table 3** below, I would estimate that only a few 10 cuartos revenue stamps were surcharged with type VIIIa and issued in January 1881, possibly due to a damaged or broken handstamp die; and that one or two sheets may have been surcharged with the type VIII surcharge and issued in April 1881. As a side note, there were several other surcharged stamps issued in 1881 as well – all with other surcharge types and on revenue stamps. No postal or telegraph stamps were surcharged until 1883 and later.

Palmer (1912) made an interesting comment on page 34 that “it is believed these were listed originally because of known copies purchased at auction some years since by a prominent American philatelist.” This statement has not been corroborated, nor am I certain who the “prominent American philatelist” was.

Reference	Stamp # or Page	Year of Issue	Note
<b>Moens</b> (1883-84)	#174	January 1881	First catalogue to list stamp.
<b>Stanley Gibbons</b> (1884)	Page 50	1882-83	
<b>Lopez</b> (1890)	NL	NL	
<b>Scott Catalogue</b> (1896)	#264	1881	
<b>Mencarini</b> (1896)	#127	January 1881	
<b>Cotter y Quinto</b> (1897)	#91	NL	Listed authority as Decree of February 22, 1883. Believed to be incorrect.
<b>Bartels et al.</b> (1904)	#D88.1	NL	Listed as "Stamp of Doubtful Status" Cited perf. and imperf. issues.
<b>Hanciau</b> (September 30, 1905)	Page 46	January 1881	
<b>Palmer</b> (1912)	Page 34	NL	Cited perf. and imperf. issues.

\* Primary references were usually written near the time of issuance of the stamp, and are usually the most authoritative account. Many authors of primary references lived in or regularly visited the Philippines, where they obtained first-hand knowledge of the stamps.

## Scarcity

Richard Miggins (1995) published a survey of many scarce to rare Philippine stamps owned by IPPS members. The results provided invaluable insight into the availability of these stamps. In particular, his survey of #115 resulted in reports of 9 singles, 1 pair, and 1 mint block of 6. It is possible that some stamps in the 1995 survey may not be included in the current inventory (**Table 3**). Hopefully, follow-up surveys will be conducted to refine these data. The scarcity of #115 is also supported by the fact that none exist in the Tapling Collection in the British Museum, London, or in the National Philatelic Museum, Washington, DC.

The inventory of #115 stamps and covers (**Table 3**) identified 41 stamps and one unique cover, which included 38 mint and three used stamps. The inventory was based on a review of websites, collections by collectors past and present, and worldwide auction catalogues of Philippine material from the 1940s to date. The inventory includes only those stamps that could be personally inspected by eyeball, scan, or photocopy. There were other reported copies, but because no scan or photocopy was available, they were not included in the inventory to avoid the possibility of double counting.

The data reveal that about 30% of the stamps have surcharge type VIIIa) and 70% have type VIII. The inventory revealed that used stamps are represented by only one single (**Figure 1**) and a pair on cover (**Figure 4**). The used stamps all had the type VIIIa surcharge.

Table 3 Inventory of Reported Scott #115 Stamps and Covers				
	Surcharge Type VIII (Bartels et al. , 1904)		Surcharge Type VIIIa (New Type)	
Single Mint	5 stamps		5 stamps	
Single Used			1 stamp	
Pair Mint	3 pair	6 stamps		
Block of 4 Mint	3 blocks	12 stamps	1 block	4 stamps
Block of 6 Mint	1 block	6 stamps		
Cover			1 cover (with pair)	2 stamps
<b>Total</b>	29 stamps		12 stamps	

Total Stamps: 41

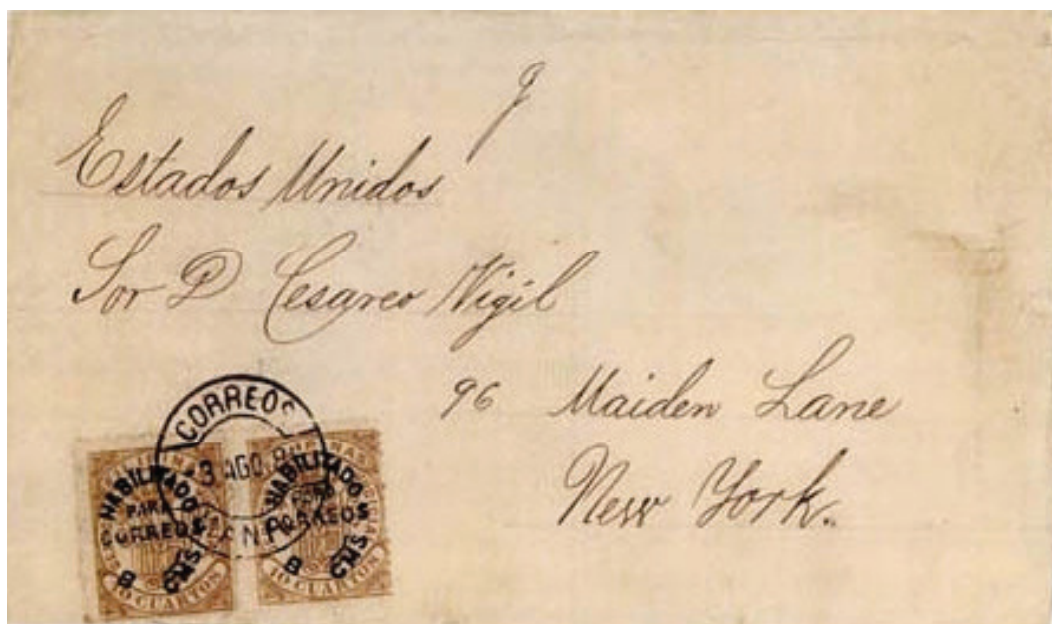


Figure 4. August 3, 1885 Manila to New York with #115 pair with type VIIIa surcharge at the overseas double-weight rate of 16 centavos. Only known cover (Richard Miggins Collection)

Variations have occurred in the application of the surcharge. For example, there are two known mint double surcharged singles – one with type VIIIa and the other type VIII. Two mint pairs are known, one with the left surcharge inverted, and one with the right inverted – both with type VIII. The largest known multiple is a mint block of six in the Richard Miggins collection (type VIII). There is also a mint pair with the right surcharge omitted (type VIII). Finally, four mint blocks are known – three with type VIII, and a fourth with type VIIIa, the latter of which has an inverted surcharge in position three. See Richard Miggins' collection of #115 on [www.philippinephilatelist.net/collections/1881-1888surchargedera/type4](http://www.philippinephilatelist.net/collections/1881-1888surchargedera/type4).

Two primary references, Bartels et al. (1904) and Palmer (1912), state that imperforate #115s are known, although none have been seen by this author. Although rare, we know that imperforates exist of other 1881-1888 surcharged issues. Finally, Harradine (1987) lists an "imperforate between pair" (#S150a) of #115. Interestingly, the ex-Nestor Jacob collection (Madrid, Spain, 1980s), included a mint #115 (type VIIIa) with a straight-edge on the right side with a wide margin. Whether this was once part of an imperforate pair, I can only conjecture. Nestor Jacob stated that the stamp came from the "famous Lombard collection".

## Forgeries

There are few forgeries of #115. This may have been because: (1) there have been few examples available of #115 for the forger to forge, and (2) there likely was little impetus to forge a stamp that collectors may not have been interested in, since it was listed as a "Stamp of Doubtful Status" by Bartels et al. (1904). A note below the Bartels listing stated that "there is also a counterfeit of this stamp", but no illustration was provided.

However, I have found stamps altered to resemble #115 by modifying the low-valued #113, where the "2 4/8" was altered or removed and replaced with an "8" (**Figure 5**). These were most likely prepared by 20th century forgers, who by then were aware of the high value of #115. However, most of the altered stamps were poorly done, show noticeable damage or disfigurement to the stamp, and are easy to recognize.



**Figure 5.** Altered Scott #113 ("2 4/8" deleted and "8" added) to resemble #115 (Don Peterson Collection).

## Summary

Scott #115 exists with one of two surcharge types. Type VIIIa occurs on only 30% of the stamps and was issued in January 1881. Type VIII was issued in April 1881, and was probably a re-touch of type VIIIa. The inventory identified 41 stamps – 38 mint and three used stamps (one single and a pair on the only known cover). Finally, the stamp is one of the most difficult Spanish Philippine issues to find -- comparable to #25 and #25A.

If anyone has #115 mint or used, I would greatly appreciate the information.

## References

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